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—but a biography based on modern scholarship and impartial judgment. For, whatever Clarendon's weaknesses, they were not so great as to deserve unqualified defense; whatever his strength it was not so small as to require unlimited praise.

W. C. ABBOTT.

*Henry Fox, First Lord Holland: a Study of the Career of an Eighteenth Century Politician.* By THAD W. RIKER, M.A., B.Litt. Oxon. In two volumes. (Oxford: Clarendon Press. 1911. Pp. 438; 419.)

THIS book, by a former Rhodes Scholar, inevitably challenges comparison with two other recent eighteenth-century biographies, Dr. von Ruville's *Chatham*, and Lord Rosebery's *Chatham*. Mr. Riker's book has the same merits and the same defects as that of Dr. von Ruville; both authors show familiarity with modern methods of research, both can track down an undated letter, or give a lucid statement of a complex situation. But too often the life expires under the dissection. Both have toiled more in dusty repositories than has Lord Rosebery, but neither has the knowledge of English political life, or of the old Whig idea of connection as a social and political force, which Lord Rosebery has as his birthright.

Mr. Riker shows commendable erudition, but little power of historical interpretation. From the chief sources, published and unpublished, he has given us a minute and externally correct account of a tangled period; he has toiled through the Newcastle and the Hardwicke correspondence, and not a few other manuscript collections in the British Museum, and in the Public Record Office; but his style is unformed, and his comments on men and things commonplace and uninteresting; his book is a clear and careful chronological statement; to the higher qualities of historical interpretation it makes little if any claim.

Though called a life of Henry Fox, Mr. Riker's book treats fully only of the period from 1754 to 1763, and especially of that from 1754 to 1757, the three years of struggle following the death of Pelham, which decided that Pitt and not Fox was to control the destinies of England. Of Fox's rise to influence he says little, and still less of his later years of retirement. Even in the period which he treats in detail, he devotes himself almost wholly to Fox as a party manager. Though as secretary at war Fox seems to have been an energetic and efficient administrator, of this side of his life Mr. Riker gives us almost nothing, perhaps wisely preferring to wait for access to the papers at Holland House. Even of the subject thus limited, Mr. Riker's treatment is external. We are given a minute and accurate account of all the ministerial changes which were made, projected, or suspected; but though we are often told that Fox was a supreme party manager, we get few glimpses into his secret. His greatest achievement was the passing through Parliament by an enor-

mous majority of the preliminaries of the peace of Paris; Mr. Riker adds little to our knowledge of how it was done; he tells us that Fox employed barefaced corruption, and keen knowledge of the baser sides of human nature; he does not reveal his methods of using his knowledge and his coin.

Mr. Riker is especially weak in his treatment of Fox's great rival, Pitt, a weakness perhaps due to the over-devotion to the Newcastle Papers. No student of Pitt's letters, in that correspondence can fail to recognize that there was in him a vein of pompous dissimulation, ill according with his high professions of disinterestedness. This touch of cant sickens Mr. Riker, as at the time it did Burke; as a result we hear altogether too much of Pitt the intriguer, and not nearly enough of the most Olympian figure in English history. If we had Mr. Riker's book alone to depend on we should be at a loss to know why in 1756-1757 the whole nation cried out for Pitt, and would have none of Fox. It is difficult to understand what Mr. Riker means by saying, "In consistency of principles and in debating powers, Fox was far the superior of Pitt" (II. 148). It is abundantly clear from Mr. Riker's own narrative that Henry Fox never in his life had a political principle, unless we can dignify with that name the determination to die wealthy and a peer. In a corrupt age he was corrupt and faithless; with all his personal charm of manner he died with hardly a friend; even the robust and not over-squeamish Rigby could not stand him (II. 289). The "honesty" on which he plumed himself was at best the honesty of Dugald Dalgetty, a desire to give efficient service to his temporary owner. He carried through Parliament the peace of Paris, and he did it well; had the ministry wished to defeat the peace, and needed Fox, he would have done their bidding with the same efficiency for the same pay.

On the whole, however, Mr. Riker is commendably free from the biographer's vice of hero-worship. Later, in a comparison of the two rivals, he hits the nail on the head when he says: "At least we can say that Pitt honoured the English people when he thought of them as a nation; while Fox on the other hand, who despised the populace as rabble, and did not look beyond the circumference of his little social and political world, caught never the slightest gleam of patriotism" (II. 208). Mr. Riker's general view of Fox is eminently fair, and if it does not change the established opinion, it at least confirms it. It is not without value that a careful and meticulous study of Fox confirms the view that he was "simply emblematic of a system of politics in vogue during the Eighteenth Century" (II. 338); a good manager of the House of Commons, fearless and logical, but utterly without constructive statesmanship.

W. L. GRANT.